

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
10 July 2003 (10.07.2003)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 03/056738 A1

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: **H04J 14/02**

(21) International Application Number: **PCT/GB02/05721**

(22) International Filing Date:
17 December 2002 (17.12.2002)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
0200177.4 4 January 2002 (04.01.2002) GB

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(81) Designated States (national): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

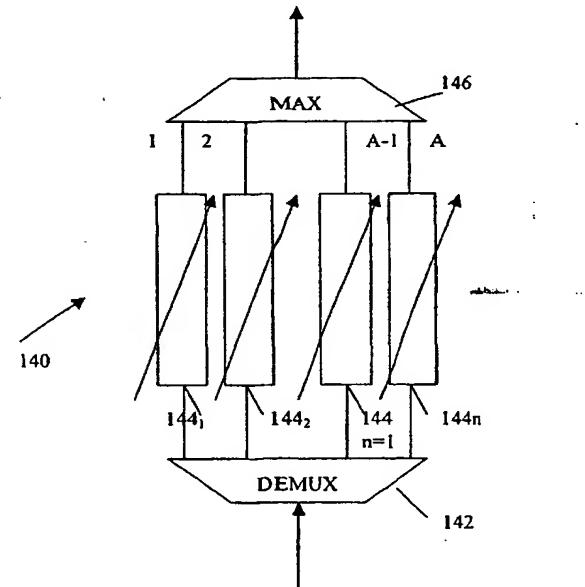
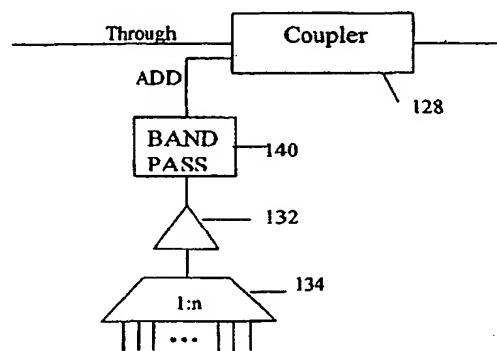
(84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— with international search report

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: NOISE REDUCTION IN OPTICAL COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS



WO 03/056738 A1

(57) Abstract: The add path of a DWDM add/drop node comprises a n:1 coupler for combining n signal sources. The combined signal is amplified and then demultiplexed. Each output of the demultiplexer is passed through a variable optical attenuator (VOA) and the VOA outputs multiplexed to form the add signal. Channels carrying no add signal and not used to control the added signals are attenuated to zero to remove a broadband noise contribution from those channels. The signal sources are run at maximum power and the signal of those channels attenuated by the respective VOAs to control their amplitude and optimise the optical signal to noise ratio of the add signal.